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ABSTRACT

Determining the proper role of State and local government and coordinating the efforts of government agencies at all levels are the top concerns of State-level education decisionmakers, including governors, legislators, and educators. A poll of Education of the States (ECS) commissioners indicates that issues of coordination and governance continue to dominate the education scene in the States and throughout the nation. Of six issues in education finance, for example, the primary concern of the 223 commissioners participating in the poll was determining the proper role of State and local governments in financial decisionmaking. Of seven education governance issues, the prime concern was determining proper federal, State, and local government roles. Of six issues concerning the education of handicapped children, the major priority identified by ECS commissioners was coordinating the efforts of all government agencies that serve handicapped children. In postsecondary education, the top concern was developing Statewide plans for the effective coordination of education services. (Author)

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State Education Priorities

A SECOND POLL OF STATE-LEVEL EDUCATION POLICYMAKERS – 1974

The Education Commission of the States (ECS) is a nonprofit organization formed by interstate compact in 1966 to further working relationships among governors, state legislators and educators for the improvement of education at all levels. Each of the 45 member states, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands is represented on the commission by seven ECS Commissioners. They usually include the governor, two state legislators, two educators and two laypersons. Thus, the 329 ECS Commissioners constitute a national cross-section of state-level education policy opinion.

EA 006 319

I. SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Determining the proper role of state and local government and coordinating the efforts of government agencies at all levels are the top concerns of state-level education decisionmakers, including governors, legislators and educators.

A poll of ECS commissioners clearly indicates that issues of coordination and governance continue to dominate the education scene in the states and throughout the nation.

Of six issues in education finance, for example, the primary concern of the 223 commissioners participating in the poll was determining the proper role of state and local governments in financial decision making.

Of seven education governance issues, the prime concern was determining proper federal, state and local government roles.

Of six issues concerning the education of handicapped children, the major priority identified by ECS commissioners was coordinating the efforts of all government agencies that serve handicapped children.

And in postsecondary education, the top concern was developing statewide plans for the effective coordination of education services.

II. BACKGROUND

This was the second time ECS commissioners had been polled in 1974. The first poll, conducted in January and February, was devoted to 18 "urgent and emerging issues confronting education in the states." The second poll, conducted in May and June, was a follow-up to the first, designed to provide more detailed information about the priorities initially identified.

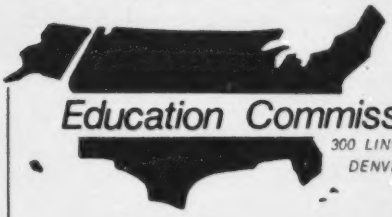
The polls were mandated by the ECS Steering Committee at its meeting in Honolulu in the fall of 1973. At that time, the commission's governing board directed the staff "to involve the ECS Commissioners more fully in the development of programs and priorities" through, in part, a poll of commissioners "at least three times a year on policy issues deserving ECS attention, including the theme and content of the annual meeting. . . ."

Responsibility for conducting the polls has been assigned to the ECS Communications Department.

A total of 233 commissioners from 45 member states, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands -- 72 per cent of the 324 commissioners to whom questionnaires were mailed -- responded to the first poll.

On the second poll, 223 commissioners responded -- 70 per cent of the 321 commissioners to whom questionnaires were mailed.

SECOND POLL COVER LETTER



Education Commission of the States
300 LINCOLN TOWER • 1860 LINCOLN STREET
DENVER, COLORADO 80203 • (303) 893-5200

Dear Commissioner:

Your participation in a second poll of ECS Commissioners would be appreciated. The final report on the first poll is enclosed for your information.

The questionnaire for this second poll is designed to provide the Commission with detailed follow-up data on the priorities you helped to identify in the first poll: education finance, education governance, educating handicapped children and postsecondary education.

Please complete this questionnaire and mail it in the envelope provided to our consultant, Mrs. Polly Carithers. Your responses should reflect your perception of concerns within your state, not your personal feelings regarding these issues.

We plan to disclose the results of this second poll at the ECS Annual Meeting in Miami, June 20-22.

We were pleased by your response to the first poll and believe the information gathered in this manner will make a substantial contribution to the effectiveness of the Commission in the months and year ahead.

Please complete this second questionnaire and return it to Mrs. Carithers as soon as possible.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Wendell H. Pierce
Executive Director

Enclosures

WHP: rl

1974 Poll Number 2

Please check:

Governor ____
Legislator ____
Educator ____
Layperson ____
Steering Committee ____

DIRECTIONS

Within each category: (1) Read all the alternatives; (2) rank them in order of priority in your state, 1 through 7; (3) place a mark in the column on the right if you believe ECS assistance in that area should be initiated or intensified.

	Rank Order	*ECS Role?*
EDUCATION FINANCE		
Determining proper state-local role in financial decision making	____	____
Linking state fund allocations to accountability	____	____
Merging federal categorical aid with state and local funds	____	____
Developing alternatives to local property tax as major source of school funding	____	____
Providing federal incentives for states to reform property tax procedures	____	____
Providing federal incentives for states to equalize funding among local districts	____	____
Other _____	____	____
EDUCATION GOVERNANCE		
Determining proper federal-state-local roles in education governance	____	____
Determining proper levels of long-range planning and decision making	____	____
Coordinating education efforts, preschool through graduate school	____	____
Developing alternative delivery systems for instruction	____	____
Developing means of recognizing noninstitutional educational achievement	____	____
Implementing performance-based management training programs for educational administrators	____	____
Coordinating activities of education agencies with related agencies	____	____
Other _____	____	____
EDUCATING HANDICAPPED CHILDREN		
Developing new legislation	____	____
Implementing new legislation	____	____
Coordinating efforts of all agencies that serve handicapped children	____	____
Developing and implementing preschool programs	____	____
Developing cost effectiveness data on programs	____	____
Developing career education programs for handicapped children	____	____
Other _____	____	____
POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION		
Developing a statewide plan for postsecondary education	____	____
Coordinating federal, state, local and private sources of funding	____	____
Preserving nonpublic postsecondary education	____	____
Developing collective bargaining legislation	____	____
Determining the state's responsibility in funding graduate education	____	____
Developing alternative means of delivering instructional services	____	____
Other _____	____	____

IN YOUR OPINION...	*Yes*	*No*
Is local tax authority essential to local program determination?	____	____
Should the state be responsible for the education of severely handicapped children?	____	____
Is permissive legislation with incentives more likely to effect desired change than mandatory legislation?	____	____

Priorities identified by commissioners participating in the first poll included financing schools and colleges, collective bargaining with teachers and faculty members and providing education services for handicapped children.

The follow-up poll was divided into four sections: education finance, education governance, educating handicapped children and postsecondary education. In addition, three questions requiring a yes or no answer were included.

III. POLL 2 RESPONSE

Questionnaires for the second poll were mailed May 14, 1974, to 321 commissioners in the 47 member jurisdictions of the commission. At the time of the mailing, eight commissioner positions in seven states were vacant. In addition, four positions on the steering committee were vacant.

When the results were tabulated on June 13, 223 commissioners had responded -- 70 per cent of those to whom questionnaires had been mailed.

Commissioners were divided into four categories: governors, state legislators, educators and laypersons. Responses were divided as follows:

Category	Number	Responses	Per Cent
Governors	46	25	54
Legislators	105	62	59
Educators	109	100	92
Laypersons	61	36	73

In addition, responses were received from 37 of 43 steering committee members -- 86 per cent -- and from 186 of 278 non-steering committee members -- 67 per cent.

IV. STATE CONCERNS

Commissioners were asked to rank order the six or seven issues cited in each of the four sections. The issues had been identified by key members of the ECS staff. In addition, commissioners were asked to indicate whether or not they felt ECS should play a role in assisting the states on each of the issues.

The results shown on the adjoining page indicate the rank order as determined by data processing, the number of commissioners that ranked each issue number one, the percentage of those responding that did so, and the number and percentage of respondents indicating an ECS role on each issue.

ALL COMMISSIONERS

223 of 321 - 70 per cent

	Rank Order	No. One	%	ECS Role?	%
EDUCATION FINANCE					
Determining proper state-local role in financial decision making	1	78	35	66	29
Linking state fund allocations to accountability	3	32	14	58	26
Merging federal categorical aid with state and local funds	4	15	7	75	33
Developing alternatives to local property tax as major source of school funding	2	75	34	69	30
Providing federal incentives for states to reform property tax procedures	6	5	2	59	26
Providing federal incentives for states to equalize funding among local districts	5	15	6	68	30
Other _____					
EDUCATION GOVERNANCE					
Determining proper federal-state-local roles in education governance	1	67	30	106	47
Determining proper levels of long-range planning and decision making	3	40	18	54	24
Coordinating education efforts, preschool through graduate school	2	64	29	64	29
Developing alternative delivery systems for instruction	4	19	8	58	26
Developing means of recognizing noninstitutional educational achievement	7	6	3	36	16
Implementing performance-based management training programs for educational administrators	6	12	5	42	18
Coordinating activities of education agencies with related agencies	5	7	2	52	23
Other _____					
EDUCATING HANDICAPPED CHILDREN					
Developing new legislation	6	18	8	43	19
Implementing new legislation	2	45	20	28	12
Coordinating efforts of all agencies that serve handicapped children	1	86	39	75	33
Developing and implementing preschool programs	4	14	6	41	18
Developing cost effectiveness data on programs	5	27	12	83	37
Developing career education programs for handicapped children	3	22	10	70	31
Other _____					
POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION					
Developing a statewide plan for postsecondary education	1	116	52	66	29
Coordinating federal, state, local and private sources of funding	2	32	14	76	34
Preserving nonpublic postsecondary education	4	17	8	44	19
Developing collective bargaining legislation	6	15	7	42	18
Determining the state's responsibility in funding graduate education	5	11	5	41	18
Developing alternative means of delivering instructional services	3	23	11	55	24
Other _____					

IN YOUR OPINION...	Yes	%	No	%
Is local tax authority essential to local program determination?	125	56	89	39
Should the state be responsible for the education of severely handicapped children?	194	86	14	6
Is permissive legislation with incentives more likely to effect desired change than mandatory legislation?	108	48	93	41

The top three concerns of all commissioners responding were as follows:

Education Finance

1. Determining proper state-local role in financial decision making.

2. Developing alternatives to local property tax as major source of school funding.

3. Linking state fund allocations to accountability.

Education Governance

1. Determining proper federal-state-local roles in education governance.

2. Coordinating education efforts, preschool through graduate school.

3. Determining proper levels of long-range planning and decision making.

Educating Handicapped Children

1. Coordinating efforts of all agencies that serve handicapped children.

2. Implementing new legislation.

3. Developing career education programs for handicapped children.

Postsecondary Education

1. Developing a statewide plan for postsecondary education.

2. Coordinating federal, state, local and private sources of funding.

3. Developing alternative means of delivering instructional services.

On the three yes-no questions, 56 per cent of the commissioners responding said they believed local tax authority is essential to local program determination, 86 per cent said the state should be responsible for the education of severely handicapped children and 48 per cent said permissive legislation with incentives is more likely to effect desired change than mandatory legislation.

V. ECS ROLE

The commissioners were asked to indicate whether or not they believed ECS could or should assist the states on each issue. Their responses did not always coincide with the priority issues they identified. For example, while commissioners ranked the coordination of services for handicapped children No. 1 in the handicapped section, they ranked it last among the issues when it came to an ECS role. Following are the top three issues in each section, according to ECS role:

Education Finance

1. Merging federal categorical aid with state and local funds.
2. Developing alternatives to local property tax as major source of school funding.
3. Providing federal incentives for states to equalize funding among local districts.

Education Governance

1. Determining proper federal-state-local roles in education governance.
2. Coordinating education efforts, preschool through graduate school.
3. Developing alternative delivery systems for instruction.

Educating Handicapped Children

1. Developing cost effectiveness data on programs.
2. Coordinating efforts of all agencies that serve handicapped children.
3. Developing career education programs for handicapped children.

Postsecondary Education

1. Coordinating federal, state, local and private sources of funding.
2. Developing a statewide plan for postsecondary education.
3. Developing alternative means of delivering instructional services.

Following are detailed reports of the responses of steering committee members, governors, legislators, educators and laypersons.

STEERING COMMITTEE

37 of 43 - 86 per cent

	Rank Order	No. One	%	ECS Role?	%
EDUCATION FINANCE					
Determining proper state-local role in financial decision making	1	18	49	9	24
Linking state fund allocations to accountability	3	6	16	14	37
Merging federal categorical aid with state and local funds	4	0	0	13	35
Developing alternatives to local property tax as major source of school funding	2	11	29	12	32
Providing federal incentives for states to reform property tax procedures	6	0	0	7	18
Providing federal incentives for states to equalize funding among local districts	5	2	5	10	27
Other _____					
EDUCATION GOVERNANCE					
Determining proper federal-state-local roles in education governance	3	8	21	14	37
Determining proper levels of long-range planning and decision making	2	6	16	8	21
Coordinating education efforts, preschool through graduate school	1	14	37	14	37
Developing alternative delivery systems for instruction	4	3	8	10	27
Developing means of recognizing noninstitutional educational achievement	6	2	5	6	16
Implementing performance-based management training programs for educational administrators	7	3	8	9	24
Coordinating activities of education agencies with related agencies	5	1	3	11	29
Other _____					
EDUCATING HANDICAPPED CHILDREN					
Developing new legislation	6	4	11	7	18
Implementing new legislation	2	8	21	6	16
Coordinating efforts of all agencies that serve handicapped children	1	18	49	10	27
Developing and implementing preschool programs	4	2	5	6	16
Developing cost effectiveness data on programs	5	3	8	15	40
Developing career education programs for handicapped children	3	2	5	16	43
Other _____					
POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION					
Developing a statewide plan for postsecondary education	1	21	57	8	21
Coordinating federal, state, local and private sources of funding	2	4	11	14	37
Preserving nonpublic postsecondary education	3	4	11	9	24
Developing collective bargaining legislation	6	3	8	9	24
Determining the state's responsibility in funding graduate education	5	3	8	5	14
Developing alternative means of delivering instructional services	4	3	8	9	24
Other _____					

IN YOUR OPINION...	Yes	%	No	%
Is local tax authority essential to local program determination?	24	67	11	29
Should the state be responsible for the education of severely handicapped children?	33	89	3	8
Is permissive legislation with incentives more likely to effect desired change than mandatory legislation?	19	51	12	32

GOVERNORS

25 of 46 - 54 per cent

	Rank Order	No. One	%	ECS Role?	%
EDUCATION FINANCE					
Determining proper state-local role in financial decision making	1	9	36	8	32
Linking state fund allocations to accountability	3	7	28	10	40
Merging federal categorical aid with state and local funds	4	1	4	9	36
Developing alternatives to local property tax as major source of school funding	2	8	32	8	32
Providing federal incentives for states to reform property tax procedures	6	1	4	9	36
Providing federal incentives for states to equalize funding among local districts	5	1	4	10	40
Other _____					
EDUCATION GOVERNANCE					
Determining proper federal-state-local roles in education governance	2	6	24	11	44
Determining proper levels of long-range planning and decision making	3	5	20	2	8
Coordinating education efforts, preschool through graduate school	1	9	36	6	24
Developing alternative delivery systems for instruction	5	1	4	8	32
Developing means of recognizing noninstitutional educational achievement	7	2	8	7	28
Implementing performance-based management training programs for educational administrators	6	1	4	6	24
Coordinating activities of education agencies with related agencies	4	2	8	5	20
Other _____					
EDUCATING HANDICAPPED CHILDREN					
Developing new legislation	6	2	8	8	32
Implementing new legislation	2	10	40	4	16
Coordinating efforts of all agencies that serve handicapped children	1	11	44	7	28
Developing and implementing preschool programs	3	1	4	4	16
Developing cost effectiveness data on programs	4	1	4	14	56
Developing career education programs for handicapped children	5	1	4	7	28
Other _____					
POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION					
Developing a statewide plan for postsecondary education	1	16	64	6	24
Coordinating federal, state, local and private sources of funding	2	2	8	7	28
Preserving nonpublic postsecondary education	3	1	4	3	12
Developing collective bargaining legislation	6	2	8	5	20
Determining the state's responsibility in funding graduate education	5	1	4	3	12
Developing alternative means of delivering instructional services	4	3	12	7	28
Other _____					

IN YOUR OPINION...	Yes	%	No	%
Is local tax authority essential to local program determination?	14	56	11	4
Should the state be responsible for the education of severely handicapped children?	23	95		
Is permissive legislation with incentives more likely to effect desired change than mandatory legislation?	16	64	6	24

LEGISLATORS

62 of 105 - 59 per cent

	Rank Order	No. One	%	ECS Role?	%
EDUCATION FINANCE					
Determining proper state-local role in financial decision making	2	19	31	12	19
Linking state fund allocations to accountability	3	8	13	16	25
Merging federal categorical aid with state and local funds	4	4	6	17	27
Developing alternatives to local property tax as major source of school funding	1	22	35	23	37
Providing federal incentives for states to reform property tax procedures	5	3	5	10	16
Providing federal incentives for states to equalize funding among local districts	6	6	10	14	22
Other _____					
EDUCATION GOVERNANCE					
Determining proper federal-state-local roles in education governance	1	20	32	25	40
Determining proper levels of long-range planning and decision making	3	10	16	17	27
Coordinating education efforts, preschool through graduate school	2	18	29	16	25
Developing alternative delivery systems for instruction	4	5	8	13	20
Developing means of recognizing noninstitutional educational achievement	7	1	2	6	10
Implementing performance-based management training programs for educational administrators	5	5	8	10	16
Coordinating activities of education agencies with related agencies	6	3	5	14	22
Other _____					
EDUCATING HANDICAPPED CHILDREN					
Developing new legislation	6	6	10	13	20
Implementing new legislation	2	13	20	7	11
Coordinating efforts of all agencies that serve handicapped children	1	22	35	23	37
Developing and implementing preschool programs	3	4	6	13	20
Developing cost effectiveness data on programs	4	10	16	18	29
Developing career education programs for handicapped children	5	4	6	22	35
Other _____					
POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION					
Developing a statewide plan for postsecondary education	1	30	48	18	29
Coordinating federal, state, local and private sources of funding	2	9	15	25	40
Preserving nonpublic postsecondary education	3	8	13	16	25
Developing collective bargaining legislation	6	4	6	13	20
Determining the state's responsibility in funding graduate education	5	6	10	16	25
Developing alternative means of delivering instructional services	4	3	5	9	15
Other _____					

IN YOUR OPINION...	Yes	%	No	%
Is local tax authority essential to local program determination?	41	66	20	32
Should the state be responsible for the education of severely handicapped children?	55	88	3	5
Is permissive legislation with incentives more likely to effect desired change than mandatory legislation?	29	46	29	46

EDUCATORS

100 of 109 - 92 per cent

	Rank Order	No. One	%	ECS Role?	%
EDUCATION FINANCE					
Determining proper state-local role in financial decision making	1	38	38	34	34
Linking state fund allocations to accountability	4	11	11	20	20
Merging federal categorical aid with state and local funds	3	10	10	38	38
Developing alternatives to local property tax as major source of school funding	2	29	29	26	26
Providing federal incentives for states to reform property tax procedures	6	1	1	29	29
Providing federal incentives for states to equalize funding among local districts	5	7	7	37	37
Other _____					
EDUCATION GOVERNANCE					
Determining proper federal-state-local roles in education governance	1	33	33	52	52
Determining proper levels of long-range planning and decision making	2	21	21	25	25
Coordinating education efforts, preschool through graduate school	3	24	24	29	29
Developing alternative delivery systems for instruction	4	9	9	28	28
Developing means of recognizing noninstitutional educational achievement	7	3	3	15	15
Implementing performance-based management training programs for educational administrators	6	4	4	16	16
Coordinating activities of education agencies with related agencies	5	2	2	25	25
Other _____					
EDUCATING HANDICAPPED CHILDREN					
Developing new legislation	6	7	7	15	15
Implementing new legislation	5	15	15	15	15
Coordinating efforts of all agencies that serve handicapped children	1	38	38	29	29
Developing and implementing preschool programs	3	7	7	14	14
Developing cost effectiveness data on programs	4	14	14	14	14
Developing career education programs for handicapped children	2	10	10	26	26
Other _____					
POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION					
Developing a statewide plan for postsecondary education	1	51	51	31	31
Coordinating federal, state, local and private sources of funding	2	19	19	33	33
Preserving nonpublic postsecondary education	4	6	6	19	19
Developing collective bargaining legislation	6	6	6	19	19
Determining the state's responsibility in funding graduate education	5	2	2	14	14
Developing alternative means of delivering instructional services	3	12	12	30	30
Other _____					

IN YOUR OPINION...	Yes	%	No	%
Is local tax authority essential to local program determination?	48	48	46	46
Should the state be responsible for the education of severely handicapped children?	80	80	7	7
Is permissive legislation with incentives more likely to effect desired change than mandatory legislation?	49	49	43	43

LAYPERSONS

36 of 61 - 59 per cent

EDUCATION FINANCE	*Rank Order*	*No. One*	*%*	*ECS Role?*	*%*
Determining proper state-local role in financial decision making	1	12	33	12	33
Linking state fund allocations to accountability	3	6	17	12	33
Merging federal categorical aid with state and local funds	4	6	17	11	30
Developing alternatives to local property tax as major source of school funding	2	16	44	12	33
Providing federal incentives for states to reform property tax procedures	5	1	3	11	30
Providing federal incentives for states to equalize funding among local districts	6	2	6	7	19
Other _____					
EDUCATION GOVERNANCE					
Determining proper federal-state-local roles in education governance	2	8	22	18	50
Determining proper levels of long-range planning and decision making	3	4	11	10	27
Coordinating education efforts, preschool through graduate school	1	13	36	13	36
Developing alternative delivery systems for instruction	4	4	11	9	25
Developing means of recognizing noninstitutional educational achievement	5	2	6	8	22
Implementing performance-based management training programs for educational administrators	6	2	6	10	27
Coordinating activities of education agencies with related agencies	7	2	6	9	25
Other _____					
EDUCATING HANDICAPPED CHILDREN					
Developing new legislation	6	3	9	7	19
Implementing new legislation	4	7	20	2	5
Coordinating efforts of all agencies that serve handicapped children	1	15	42	16	44
Developing and implementing preschool programs	3	2	6	10	27
Developing cost effectiveness data on programs	5	2	6	11	30
Developing career education programs for handicapped children	2	7	19	15	41
Other _____					
POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION					
Developing a statewide plan for postsecondary education	1	19	53	11	30
Coordinating federal, state, local and private sources of funding	2	2	6	11	30
Preserving nonpublic postsecondary education	6	2	6	6	17
Developing collective bargaining legislation	5	5	13	5	13
Determining the state's responsibility in funding graduate education	4	2	6	8	22
Developing alternative means of delivering instructional services	3	6	17	9	25
Other _____					

IN YOUR OPINION...	*Yes*	*%*	*No*	*%*
Is local tax authority essential to local program determination?	22	61	12	33
Should the state be responsible for the education of severely handicapped children?	28	77	4	11
Is permissive legislation with incentives more likely to effect desired change than mandatory legislation?	14	38	15	41

VI. ANALYSIS

Generally, ECS commissioners were in agreement on priority issues and the appropriateness of an ECS role. The governors, for example, ranked the same issues first and second as did all commissioners, although not always in the same order.

There were, however, some differences in perspectives. For example, while 40 per cent of the governors responding indicated that implementing new legislation for the handicapped was a top concern, only 15 per cent of the educators agreed. While all commissioners cited determining proper federal-state-local roles as the No. 1 governance issue, steering committee members ranked it third.

Many commissioners took advantage of the opportunity to write in additional concerns. While none of these were mentioned frequently enough to be included in the rank order in any section, a few deserve brief mention:

"Providing more federal funding, hopefully non-categorical."

"Discouraging federal funding other than revenue sharing."

"Evaluation of teacher performance."

"Organizing state education on a functional basis."

"Mainstreaming handicapped children."

"Implementing programs for the gifted."

"Better coordination of public and private institutions."

While each ECS project and program can analyze the results in accordance with its own concerns and objectives, a general conclusion is apparent: Issues of coordination and governance continue to be of prime concern in the states and ECS assistance on such issues is desired.

In conducting its polls of commissioners, ECS has employed the services of Mrs. Polly Carithers, public information director for the Oakland Schools, the intermediate school district serving Oakland County, Michigan. Mrs. Carithers is the author of a book, How to Conduct Low Cost Surveys, published by the National School Public Relations Association. She assisted in the preparation of the questionnaires and provided data processing services. Commissioners sent their completed questionnaires directly to Mrs. Carithers; no one at ECS knows how an individual commissioner responded.